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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 08 DJIBOUTI 000261

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE  
STATE FOR DS/TIA/ITA

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDRESSEE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019-04-01  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [DJ](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI-Security Environmental Profile Questionnaire

REF: 09 STATE 13023

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CLASSIFIED BY: Ellen Tannor, Regional Security Officer, U.S.  
Department of State, U.S. Embassy, Djibouti; REASON: 1.4(D), (G)

[1](#)1. (U) Post provides the following responses to questions raised  
reftel.

[1](#)2. (SBU) DEMONSTRATIONS

[1](#)A. (U) ARE THERE ANY ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN COUNTRY  
CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT SIGNIFICANT ANTI-AMERICAN

DEMONSTRATIONS?

No. In December 2008 and January 2009, the Ministry of Islamic  
affairs called for a rally in support of the Palestinian people, in  
response to sustained Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip. There  
were various images of U.S. and Israeli flags at the rally.  
Reports indicated the rally would take to the streets en route to  
the Palestinian Embassy (less than 1 mile from U.S. Embassy);  
however, police blocked any procession of demonstrators beyond its  
authorized location. Police had only minor clashes with young  
demonstrators, but no overt anti-American sentiment

Over 60% of Djiboutians are ethnic Somali with close ties to  
Somaliland (northwestern Somalia). The population is 99% percent  
Sunni Muslim, with generally a pro-American sentiment. However, due  
to close ties to Somalia, when unrest occurs in Somalia, tensions  
can rise and have a spillover effect in Djibouti.

[1](#)B. (U) HAVE THERE BEEN ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE COUNTRY  
WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

No.

[1](#)C. (U) HAVE DEMONSTRATIONS TAKEN PLACE NEAR OR IN FRONT OF U.S.  
DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES?

There have been small-scale (20-50 people) demonstrations at the Ministry of Equipment and Transport (located next door to the Embassy), which were resolved peacefully, but no demonstrations directed at the Embassy or U.S. interests.

1D. (U) WHAT IS THE AVERAGE SIZE OF AN ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION?

N/A

1E. (U) ARE ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS USUALLY TRIGGERED BY U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES, MILITARY ACTIONS, OR BY DOMESTIC ISSUES?

N/A

1F. (U) ARE DEMONSTRATIONS GENERALLY VIOLENT OR PEACEFUL?

N/A

1G. (U) IF VIOLENT, HAVE ANY DEMONSTRATIONS RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO USG PROPERTY OR INJURIES TO USG EMPLOYEES?

N/A

1H. (U) IF VIOLENT, HAVE ANY DEMONSTRATORS EVER PENETRATED OUR PERIMETER SECURITY LINE?

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N/A

1I. (U) HAVE THERE BEEN ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE COUNTRY WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

Yes, there have been several small-scale anti-government demonstrations over the past year. Most of the demonstrations protested inadequate social services and poor economic conditions, particularly the lack of food, electricity and water, coupled with increasing prices and high unemployment. In July and August 2008, there were demonstrations about food and the host government's relocation of poor residents.

On July 31, 2008, an estimated 200 poor immigrants from the Ariba district of the capital city of Djibouti engaged in a violent clash with police as they protested the government's removal and displacement of residents in the capital's Balballa area. Tear gas was dispersed on the excitable crowd, and calm and order was restored within two hours.

On August 11, 2008, over 500 people, mainly nomads from rural communities and Ethiopian immigrants, protested at the offices of the host government's refugee agency, in the neighborhood near the Presidential residence (within 2 miles from Embassy residences) over the lack of food in the country and the improper distribution of food aid.

Most recently, in March 2009, an organization named "Arch 6" attempted to hold a rally/demonstration against the ruling

coalition, to protest the perceived inequity of power among tribal clans (Issa/Issak). There was great security concern over the rally. However, the police quickly arrested the organizers, and no rally was allowed to take place.

1J. (U) HAVE DEMONSTRATIONS TAKEN PLACE NEAR OR IN FRONT OF  
U.S. DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES?

No.

1K. (U) WHAT IS THE AVERAGE SIZE OF AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT  
DEMONSTRATION?

Between 50 and 500 plus.

1L. (U) ARE DEMONSTRATIONS GENERALLY VIOLENT OR PEACEFUL?

Demonstrations are peaceful, but sometimes have elements of violence (although not deadly). In the past, there have been minor injuries and some arrests, due to clashes with the police.

1M. (U) IF VIOLENT, HAVE ANY DEMONSTRATIONS RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO  
USG PROPERTY?

No.

13. (U) MACRO CONFLICT CONDITIONS

1A. (U) IS THE HOST COUNTRY ENGAGED IN AN INTERSTATE OR INTRASTATE  
CONFLICT? (THIS MAY INCLUDE BATTLES BETWEEN ORGANIZED AND VIOLENT  
DRUG CARTELS)

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Yes. In April 2008, Djiboutian authorities protested Eritrea's deployment of troops and construction of military fortifications along their common border, particularly on the peninsula of Ras Doumeira, near the strategic Bab al Mandeb strait between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. On June 10, 2008, the first exchange of small arms fire occurred between the two countries, when Eritrean forces fired on Eritrean troops fleeing to Djibouti. There were approximately 70 to 80 casualties reported, including approximately 40 deaths on the Djiboutian side and an unknown number on the Eritrean side. Djibouti has appealed to the Arab League, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations, but Eritrea has not granted any visas to admit fact-finding missions into Eritrea. In January 2009, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1862 demanding Eritrea withdraw forces and equipment from the border, acknowledge disputes with Djibouti, engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve issues, and abide by international obligations. A review six weeks later resulted in no changes.

To date, military forces remain on both sides of the border, with no resolution in sight for the foreseeable future.

1B. (U) IF AN INTRASTATE CONFLICT, IS IT AN INSURGENCY LIMITED TO A  
SPECIFIC REGION OR IS IT A COUNTRYWIDE CIVIL WAR?

N/A

1C. (U) IF LIMITED TO A SPECIFIC REGION, ARE ANY U.S. DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES LOCATED IN THIS REGION?

N/A

1D. (U) HAVE ANY OF THE FACTIONS INVOLVED IN INTRASTATE CONFLICTS SIGNALLED OR DEMONSTRATED AN ANTI-AMERICAN ORIENTATION?

N/A

14. (U) HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

1A. (SBU) ARE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES PROFESSIONAL AND WELL-TRAINED?

There are two main law enforcement entities in Djibouti: the National Police and the Gendarmerie.

The Djiboutian National Police Force are considered to be the lesser trained of the law enforcement entities, as there is no specific education requirement. Their entire training academy is 6 months long. They also lack adequate resources to perform their job capably. The lack of transportation, fuel, and communications equipment, affects police responsiveness. Although police receive initial entry-level training, it is not regularly reinforced. The National Police are responsible for protection of the mission and neighborhoods. They are posted directly outside the mission and fulfill all duties as requested. They are professional and responsive to the best of their ability.

The Gendarmes are deemed to be the better trained, more professional, and better respected law enforcement entity in Djibouti. The Gendarmerie recruits candidates with a 10th grade education or above, and recruits spend 2 years in military training before graduation. However, their lack of resources makes them equally incapable of performing at the desired level. Currently, the Gendarmes have one vehicle per brigade for patrols; a brigade consists of 8-12 people.

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1B. (U) HAVE THEY BEEN TRAINED BY U.S. AGENCIES? IF SO, PLEASE ELABORATE ON EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING.

Select officers within Djiboutian law enforcement have received DS/ATA, INL/ILEA, FBI, or NCIS training. The training is welcomed and appreciated, but because of its infrequency, it is difficult to evaluate its overall effectiveness. It continues to be challenging to get the various law enforcement officers in training, due to frequent last-minute changes and cancellations. We underscored to leadership that such activities make helping the Djiboutians difficult.

1C. (SBU) ARE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES CONFRONTED WITH SERIOUS, WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION INSIDE THEIR AGENCIES?

It is very common for law enforcement officers to request fees for services that should be provided without charge, particularly with the immigrant population. It is also known that law enforcement will sell fuel from their own official vehicles for profit. Such improper actions appear to be standard operating procedure for

Djibouti's poorly paid law enforcement officers.

1D. (S/NF) ARE THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES PROFESSIONAL AND CAPABLE OF DETERRING TERRORIST ACTIONS?

Yes, intelligence services are very capable and professional. However, their capabilities lie within Djibouti city; they have limited capability to monitor activities outside the capital. They have demonstrated the capability to deter terrorism and have been successful in intercepting and turning over suspected terrorists to U.S. authorities.

1E. (S) HAVE THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES BEEN COOPERATIVE WITH U.S.EMBASSY REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT?

Yes, the National Security Service has been extremely cooperative with Embassy requests; what they lack in experience they make up for in cooperation. The Embassy enjoys a strong relationship.

1F. (S) ASSUMING THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT TERRORIST THREATS IN RECENT YEARS, HAVE HOST COUNTRY SECURITY SERVICES BEEN

ABLE TO SCORE ANY MAJOR ANTI-TERRORISM SUCCESSES?

Yes, the host government has directly assisted in the capture of al-Qaida East Africa (AQEA) cadre, one of whom remains in U.S. detention. In addition, the host government played a direct role in successful efforts to interdict MANPADS.

1G. (C) HAS HOST COUNTRY BEEN RESPONSIVE (RE: TIMELINESS AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES) TO EMBASSY REQUESTS FOR PROTECTIVE

SECURITY?

Host country has been extremely responsive. However, they generally lack the resources to make effective change in security when requested. At best, Embassy resources are a deterrent and best defense against crime.

1H. (SBU) HOW DOES THE EMBASSY ASSESS THE OVERALL SECURITY AT MAJOR AIRPORTS IN THE COUNTRY? (EXCELLENT; VERY GOOD,POOR.)

Overall airport operations are managed by the private-sector Dubai Ports World (DPW), representing sovereign capital of Dubai. However, the security at the airport is managed by the Gendarmerie and works relatively well, given the lack of security resources and training.

Travelers possessing tickets and necessary documentation are

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allowed into the processing sections of the airport. However, according to DPW, some 1,200 individuals have VIP credentials allowing them varying degrees of unlimited access to the airport. Host government is taking active measures to reduce the number of official badges, including diplomatic missions. The U.S. Embassy has been asked to reduce its number of badge-holders.

All persons and bags are screened through x-ray; however, there is no x-ray screening for cargo. While the Gendarmerie presents a professional front, their operating procedures and use of x-ray

remain dubious at best. The commercial runway is adjacent to flight lines used by the French and U.S. military.

Djibouti is one of the few countries that accept direct flights from Somalia, which poses its own inherent security risks. In addition, there are daily cargo flights from Ethiopia carrying khat, which attracts numerous khat distributors to the airport upon the flights arrival.

1I. (U) HOW EFFECTIVE ARE CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION CONTROLS AGENCIES? (EFFECTIVE; AVERAGE; INEFFECTIVE)

(S/NF) With the implementation of TIP/PISCES (software that tracks every person entering and leaving the country, including transfers), the Djiboutian immigration officials have shown improvements in their immigration controls at the airport.

(SBU) In 2006, the Port of Djibouti contracted with Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited (LRQA) to assist with implementation of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 28000:2005. ISO/PAS 28000:2005 is a non-regulatory industry standard for supply-chain security management and conducts independent certification of management systems. LRQA and DPW identified the ISPS Code as a requirement for compliance with the ISO/PAS 28000:2005 standards. LRQA audited the Port of Djibouti container terminal in July 2006 and identified major non-conformities. LRQA conducted a revisit in August 2007 and found that all major non-conformities had been resolved.

(SBU) An April 2007 review of the Djibouti Ports security measures by the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security (IPS) Team found that Djibouti had "substantially implemented" the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.

1J. (SBU) HOW EFFECTIVE ARE BORDER PATROL FORCES? (EFFECTIVE; AVERAGE; INEFFECTIVE).

Ineffective border control remains one of the single most important problems in Djibouti. Djibouti receives hundreds of illegal immigrants, refugees, and internally displaced people monthly and is located 11 miles from the Somali border. The borders are extremely porous and immigration simply does not have the resources or the manpower to institute tighter controls. Immigrants and refugees walk across daily.

Previously, the majority of refugees were coming from Somaliland, but now many hail from southern Somalia (e.g., Mogadishu) due to the recent increase in violence in Somalia. This raises security concerns, as the host government has no effective way of determining identity or managing the flow of refugees who are now visible in all parts of the capital. The host country border control forces patrols with U.S. forces from the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CTJF-HOA), as part of joint military training, which provides some deterrence. However, the lack of resources at every level limits the government's effectiveness. There are Section 1206 security assistance proposals, and ATA

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training programs in progress or being developed, to overcome this deficiency.

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INDIGENOUS TERRORISM  
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15. (U) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

1A. (U) ARE THERE INDIGENOUS, ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST GROUPS IN COUNTRY?

No.

1B. (U) IF YES, HOW MANY? PLEASE NAME GROUPS.

No.

1C. (U) HAVE GROUPS CARRIED OUT ANTI-AMERICAN ATTACKS WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

No.

1D. (U) WERE ANY OF THESE LETHAL ATTACKS?

N/A

1E. (U) HAVE GROUPS ATTACKED U.S. DIPLOMATIC TARGETS?

N/A

1F. (U) HAVE GROUPS ATTACKED U.S. BUSINESS, U.S. MILITARY, OR U.S. RELATED TARGETS?

N/A

1G. (U) HAVE GROUPS LIMITED THEIR ATTACKS TO SPECIFIC REGIONS OR DO THEY OPERATE COUNTRY-WIDE?

N/A

1H. (U) IF ATTACKS ARE LIMITED TO REGIONS, ARE THERE ANY U.S. DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES LOCATED IN THESE REGIONS?

N/A

16. (U) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

1A. (U) ARE THERE OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS (NOT ANTI-AMERICAN) IN COUNTRY?

No

1B. (U) IF YES, HOW MANY? PLEASE NAME GROUPS.

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N/A

1C. (U) HAVE GROUPS CARRIED OUT ATTACKS IN THE CAPITAL OR IN AREAS WHERE U.S. DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES ARE LOCATED?

N/A

1D. (U) WERE ATTACKS LETHAL AND/OR INDISCRIMINATE?

N/A

1E. (U) HAVE THERE BEEN ANY AMERICANS KILLED OR INJURED IN THESE ATTACKS?

N/A

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TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM  
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17. (U) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS

1A. (S) ARE THERE ANY FOREIGN TERRORIST GROUPS THAT HAVE A PRESENCE IN COUNTRY? PROVIDE NAMES.

Yes, the Jihadist group Al-Itihaad Al-Islamiya (AIAI) exists in Djibouti, although it has been largely absorbed by the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF); elements of which have cooperated with Al-Qaida East Africa. Members of Al-Shabaab are also present in Djibouti, elements of which have cooperated with Al-Qaida East Africa (AQEA). Al-Shabaab continues to use Djibouti as a transit point. There is increased focus on Djibouti as it continues to hosts UN sponsored Somalia peace talks.

While Al-Shabaab may not have an active operational presence in Djibouti, their October 2008 attacks of the Ethiopian Embassy, Presidency and United Nations Development Program offices in Hargeisa, Somaliland was conducted further north than ever before. Djiboutians have well noted clan ties to northern Somalia. It further demonstrated an increased sophistication in Al-Shabaab's method and execution of attacks.

1B. (U) HOW DOES POST ASSESS THIS PRESENCE? IS IT AN OPERATIONAL CELL? FINANCIAL CELL? SUPPORT CELL? PROPAGANDA CELL?

(S) Three main ethnic insurgent groups with an active presence in Djibouti are:

1) United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF)



2) the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and

3) the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

There are also members of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) present in Djibouti, but not a unified organization. Ethnic insurgents groups (OLF, ONLF, CIC) are not assessed to have operational cells in Djibouti. The OLF, ONLF and UWSLF all conduct fund raising and obtain medical care and other services in Djibouti. Actual training activities are unknown.

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(S) Al-Shabaab is more likely a financial and a support cell but serving as an operational and targeting cell can not be ruled out. Al-Shabaab continues to look for funding mechanisms to support attacks in Somalia.

1C. (C) IS THE HOST GOVERNMENT SYMPATHETIC TO THESE GROUPS?

The host government is not sympathetic to these ethnic insurgent groups; however, the government is aware of their presence and continues to monitor their movements and actions inside the country.

1D. (U) ARE THERE SUSPECT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN THE COUNTRY THAT HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY OF THESE GROUPS?

No.

1E. (S/NF) ARE THERE ANY ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN COUNTRY THAT ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THESE GROUPS?

The Eritrean Embassy has been known to provide support to elements of the CIC in Djibouti. Many Somali-speaking Djiboutians voiced support for the CIC and opposed Ethiopian action in Somalia. The CIC does not exist anymore, as it has been absorbed by the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS). Eritrea continues to support Al-Shabaab and more extremist elements of the ARS.

1F. (S/NF) HOW DOES POST ASSESS THE LEVEL, INTENT, AND SCOPE OF HOSTILE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES (IRAN, IRAQ, SYRIA, SERBIA,

SUDAN ET. AL.) IN COUNTRY RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST ACTS?

Eritrea is believed to support terrorism and insurgent elements (in Somalia). There is an increase of Iranian interest in Djibouti as evidenced by the recent February 2009 trip of Iranian President Mohamed Ahmadinejad to Djibouti.

1G. (U) HOW DOES POST ASSESS THE AVAILABILITY OF WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES IN COUNTRY OR FROM NEARBY COUNTRIES FOR HOSTILE

TERRORIST ELEMENTS?

(S/NF) There is a high degree accessibility to and availability of weapons, chemicals and heavy equipment from neighboring countries around Djibouti, particularly Somalia. There has been recently documented evidence of weapons from China passing through Djibouti en route to Ethiopia, although not terrorist-related. The port remains an active transport hub for weapons movements in the region, including Ethiopia and Somalia.

(S/NF) In December 2007, a walk-in source provided information on MANPADS which were subsequently surrendered to Djiboutian and U.S. officials and destroyed by CJTF-HOA EOD AT Camp Lemonier, Djibouti.  
SWAN